

REMARKS

Claims 1-24 are pending in the present application. Claims 1, 7, 13, and 19 have been amended. Claims 1, 7, 13, and 19 are independent claims. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider the outstanding rejections in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Ohta/Yasuhiro

Claims 1, 3-7, 9-13, 15-19, and 21-24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over EP Publication No. 0924648A2 to Yoshinori Ohta et al. (hereafter "Ohta") in view of JP Publication No. 10028221A to Yasuhiro Saito et al. (hereafter "Yasuhiro"). This rejection, insofar as it pertains to the presently pending claims, is respectfully traversed.

As amended, independent claims 1, 7, 13, and 19 now recite that first and second regions in the synthesized image are specified, such that the specified first region comprises the natural image. According to the claim amendments, each pixel in the first region judged to have the same color as pixels in the second region is designated as being part of the CG-image. The amended claims further recite that the separation of the synthesized image into the natural-image and CG-image regions includes removing from the first region the pixels designated as part of the CG-image.

Applicants respectfully submit that Ohta and Yasuhiro, taken separately or in combination, fail to teach or suggest the above combination of claim features.

In the rejection, the Examiner relies on Yasuhiro to teach extracting a specific color from the synthesized image (see Office Action at paragraph bridging pages 3-4). However, Yasuhiro requires a *user* to choose a color via the control panel (see machine translation at paragraphs 0019-20). Further, Yasuhiro's invention does not specify regions in the image before the color is chosen and the corresponding image data is extracted. Thus, Yasuhiro fails to teach or suggest

removing, from one of the specified regions, pixels that are judged to have the same color as pixels in the other specified region, as claimed. Further, Applicants submit that Ohta fails to remedy in Yasuhiro.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that Ohta and Yasuhiro, taken separately or in combination, fail to teach or suggest every claimed feature of claims 1, 7, 13, and 19. At least for this reason, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claims 1, 7, 13, and 19 are allowable over Ohta/Yasuhiro. Accordingly, claims 3-6, 9-12, 15-18, and 21-24 are allowable at least by virtue of their dependency on the independent claims. Therefore, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw this rejection.

Applicant respectfully submits that when one recognizes that a problem exists in the prior art, and thereafter, solves that problem, that the Applicant is entitled to a patent when the prior art fails to teach or suggest the solution thereof.

Ohta/Yasuhiro/Joshi

Claims 2, 8, 14, and 20 stand rejected under § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ohta and Yasuhiro in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,982,381 to Joshi et al (hereafter "Joshi"). Applicants respectfully submit that Joshi fails to remedy the deficiencies of Ohta and Yasuhiro set forth above in connection with independent claims 1, 7, 13, and 19. Particularly, the Examiner relies on Joshi merely to teach the blurring of a boundary portion between the natural-image and CG-image regions (see Office Action at paragraph bridging pages 8-9). As such, Applicants submit that claims 2, 8, 14, and 20 are allowable at least by virtue of their dependency on claims 1, 7, 13, and 19. Therefore, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw this rejection.

Conclusion

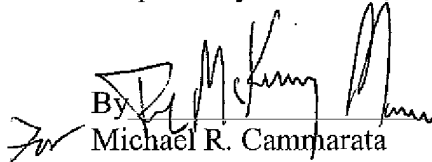
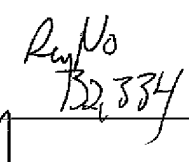
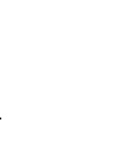
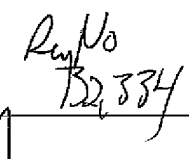
In view of the above amendments and remarks, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider the outstanding rejections and issue a Notice of Allowance in the present application.

Should the Examiner believe that any outstanding matters remain in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Jason W. Rhodes (Reg. No. 47,305) at the telephone number of the undersigned to discuss the present application in an effort to expedite prosecution.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

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Respectfully submitted,

By    
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